



# Tomorrow Woods Forest Management Cost-Share Program

*Landowner Cost-Assistance Program*

Forestry Topic 17

[www.dof.virginia.gov](http://www.dof.virginia.gov)

February 2014

The Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) is working with forest landowners to create new forests and to better grow existing forests in parts of southeast and central Virginia. This will help to replace forests that are lost due to clearing for other land uses. Working forests produce wood for lumber, paper, and energy; provide clean air and homes for wildlife, and protect our soil and streams. Tomorrow Woods, a privately-funded program, provides generous incentives for tree planting and practices that enhance growth of woods.

## Making It Last

A key goal of this program is to keep woods as woods. To help landowners with this, VDOF or a private consulting forester can prepare an overall management plan for the property. This Forest Stewardship Plan, or an equivalent plan, identifies objectives of the owner; describes the forests, and gives recommendations for long-term management practices. Some owners may choose to voluntarily place a conservation easement on their property. While this would prevent future development, the owners would be allowed to use the land and harvest trees on their property. Payments are higher for Conserved Lands and Stewardship Lands, and the program can also provide an incentive for placing land under an easement.

## Landowner Eligibility

The Tomorrow Woods program funding is available to:

- ◆ Private forest landowners, not timber companies
- ◆ Farmers
- ◆ Non-profit organizations

## Property Eligibility

The Tomorrow Woods program funding is available to forest landowners and non-profit organizations that own land in the following localities:

- ◆ Albemarle, Amelia, Appomattox, Brunswick, Buckingham, Chesterfield, Cumberland, Dinwiddie,

Fluvanna, Gloucester, Goochland, Greenville, Isle of Wight, Louisa, Lunenburg, Mathews, Mecklenburg, Middlesex, Nottoway, Powhatan, Prince Edward, Prince George, Southampton, Surry, Sussex and York counties (\* Except in the Rivanna River basin in parts of Albemarle and Fluvanna counties)

- ◆ City of Suffolk

## Eligible Practices

### Tree Planting on Open Land

Incentive to plant trees in open fields, idle farm land, pastures (not for cutover timberland). Trees make an ideal crop on land that may be poor for crops; fields that are too wet, dry or steep; hard to access with farm equipment, or where finding a tenant is difficult. This would also help owners qualify for forestland use-value taxation. Trees grow quickly and can produce valuable crops of wood.



### How it Works

- ◆ VDOF Forester explains program; makes recommendations for preparing the land (clipping, spraying, sub-soiling, etc.) and tree planting (type of tree, spacing), and provides application.
- ◆ Landowner or contractor completes the site preparation and tree planting and pays the costs. VDOF can assist in coordination and rental of tree planting equipment. VDOF also operates seedling nurseries that produce high-quality trees that are well-suited for the purpose.

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- ◆ VDOF Forester inspects the job, receives copies of receipts and begins reimbursement process.

## Incentive

- ◆ Conserved Lands or Stewardship Lands – 100% of project costs (up to \$200 per acre), Plus \$350/acre
- ◆ For other open land – 75% of project cost (up to \$200 per acre), Plus \$250/acre

## Fencing to Protect Trees Planted on Open Land

Cost assistance is available for fencing to exclude livestock from open lands that are planted under the program.

- ◆ Conserved Lands or Stewardship Lands – \$2 per lineal foot, up to maximum of \$2,000
- ◆ For other open land – \$1.50 per lineal foot, up to maximum of \$1,500

## Forest Enhancement

There are a number of ways that woods can be treated to help them grow better, healthier and faster, and add more wood of better quality. Tomorrow Woods can provide assistance in getting this done in wooded and cutover areas. Here are some examples of practices:

- ◆ Weed control (helps trees get a fast start by reducing weeds that take water and soil nutrients away from trees).
- ◆ Fertilization to improve tree growth.
- ◆ Controlling non-crop plants mid-way through the growth cycle (again reduces other plants that take water and nutrients away from crop trees).

## How it Works

VDOF forester makes recommendation, provides application, and can assist owner with locating contractors to perform work. Owner pays for work and submits costs to VDOF forester for reimbursement.

## Incentive

- ◆ Conserved Lands – 90% of cost, up to \$100/acre. 100-acre maximum per year.
- ◆ Stewardship Lands – 75% of cost, up to \$75/acre. 100-acre maximum per year.



## Program Requirements

- ◆ Practices must be maintained for 20 years, or for the life of the practice. Harvesting is allowed, but area must be kept in forest use. Otherwise, owner must repay with interest.
- ◆ Open lands planted under the program are eligible for forest enhancement practices and replanting if needed.
- ◆ Areas must be available for future harvesting.
- ◆ Area must be at least five acres in size, unless approved by VDOF forester.

## Conservation Easement Incentive

VDOF and Tomorrow Woods provide incentives for placing land under conservation easement.

For more information on any of the Tomorrow Woods practices, contact your local VDOF office.

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